

Senate Joint Resolution No. 29

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 125

Senate Joint Resolution No. 29—Relative to voting rights.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 10, 2012.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 29, Yee. Voting: disenfranchisement.

This measure would proclaim the Legislature's support for the investigation by the federal Department of Justice into whether state legislatures are discriminating against and suppressing the vote of minorities, senior citizens, young adults, or those with physical disabilities or limited economic means, and the measure would further denounce any law that disenfranchises society's most disadvantaged eligible voters.

WHEREAS, With great enthusiasm and interest, more than five million new voters participated in the 2008 statewide general election; and

WHEREAS, Many new voters in 2008 were minorities, which included African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos; and

WHEREAS, The voter participation gap between Caucasians and minorities fell in the 2008 election; and

WHEREAS, African Americans and Latinos registered to vote at nearly twice the rate of Caucasians in voter registration drives in 2008; and

WHEREAS, Sadly, after 2008, more than 30 state legislatures introduced voter suppression laws that may disenfranchise an estimated five million voters from registering to vote or casting a ballot in the 2012 statewide general election; and

WHEREAS, Voter suppression is a deliberate political act designed to disenfranchise minorities, young adults, the poor, the disabled, and the elderly; and

WHEREAS, Prior to 2006, no state required an individual to show a government-issued photo identification to vote; and

WHEREAS, The most underserved and least powerful, which include the poor, the homeless, minorities, the disabled, and the elderly, are disproportionately affected by the requirement to show a state-issued identification card, due to a lack of financial means, time, or mobility; and

WHEREAS, State laws limiting voter registration drives impede the rights of free speech and freedom of assembly; and

WHEREAS, Voter registration drives are the single most effective means of registering minority voters; and

WHEREAS, Eliminating same-day registration in some states, or shortening the period of time for in-person early voting in others, deters citizens from participating in democracy; and

WHEREAS, Nearly all instances of alleged voter fraud are either clerical or typographical errors on the voter roll; and

WHEREAS, The act of fraudulently voting is a singularly inefficient and ineffective act, carrying the risk of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine for each offense; and

WHEREAS, Many state legislators now argue voter fraud is rampant, leading 16 states to enact voter suppression laws in 2011 that require state-issued identification, restrict voter registration drives, or limit early voting by either mail or in person; and

WHEREAS, Voter suppression laws are the modern form of voter discrimination; and

WHEREAS, An election system with fair access provides the greatest guard to our rights and liberties; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of California, jointly, That the State of California supports the investigation by the federal Department of Justice into whether state legislatures are discriminating against and suppressing the vote of minorities, senior citizens, young adults, or those with physical disabilities or limited economic means; and be it further

Resolved, That the State of California denounces any law that disenfranchises society's most disadvantaged eligible voters; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President and the Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the author for appropriate distribution.